OCCUPATIONAL

# HEALTH & SAFETY

SEPTEMBER 2006

# TAPPING THE UNDER-REPRESENTED WORKFORCE: CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO LABOUR SHORTAGES

**by Cheryl Knight**

The Canadian petroleum industry is facing its toughest challenge yet: securing the labour force it needs to keep up with the pace of growth in today's sizzling energy market.

The most recognized reasons behind the current and future worker supply shortage are an aging workforce, competition from other industries and a lingering public perception of an unstable and volatile industry. Young people especially believe (on the whole, incorrectly) that work environments in the petroleum industry are "unsafe and uncaring," and that it is "an industry of unskilled, untrained workers." Safety concerns such as over-fatigue, exhaustion and under-trained workers are further increased when there is a scarce and over-worked labour force.

Therefore, I believe more comprehensive human resources approaches and creative practices are needed. In particular, we need to utilize a highly untapped source of skilled labour—the under-represented workforce. This includes women, Aboriginals, visible minorities and immigrants.

These are just a few of the reasons for tapping into this segment of the workforce:

- Levels of immigration in Canada are higher than they have been for a number of decades.
- Immigrants to Canada tend to have higher levels of education than their Canadian-born counterparts, and it's estimated that, by the year 2011, 100 per cent of Canada's net labour force growth will depend on immigration.
- The Aboriginal population is the fastest-growing group in Canada, and is on average 10 years younger than the general population.
- The Aboriginal workforce continues to grow, and many Aboriginal people reside in the frontier locations where the petroleum industry operates.

Through various outreach approaches and initiatives, the Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada has been working on strategies to help industry tap into under-represented sources of labour as well as traditional workers. For example, the Career Awareness Petroleum Outreach strategy identifies mechanisms for effectively communicating with the traditional and under-represented workforce about careers in the oil and gas industry, and raises the profile of the industry's various career opportunities. The Council has conducted research to better understand under-represented groups' commonly held misconceptions, perceived barriers to careers and industry training, and information gaps about how to enter a career in the petroleum sector. Proposed solutions include:

> More comprehensive human resources approaches and creative practices are needed.

- strengthening alliances with post-secondary institutions
- identifying role models in under-represented groups who can speak about career experiences
- acting in collaboration with industry employers to provide clear, accessible and relevant information about career opportunities

Additionally, the Council has developed a model that helps employers see through the eyes of potential employees and sets out decision points where companies can influence or enhance their chances of attracting and retaining a new hire. The model, along with best and promising practices and an inventory of tools and resources, forms the basis of the newly-created draft edition of the "Increasing the Talent" toolkit.

Overcoming complex issues in the areas of safety and labour shortages requires strategic planning, patience and an effective model for implementing change. Attracting, retaining and developing a workforce goes hand-in-hand with providing a work environment that puts safety first and supports the personal development of employees.

*Cheryl Knight is the executive director and CEO of the Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada, a national, not-for-profit, collaborative forum that addresses human resources issues in the upstream petroleum industry. See www.petrohrsc.ca.*

OCCUPATIONAL
# HEALTH & SAFETY

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ErgoTips and Real World Solutions will return next issue.

## 2006 AWARDS FOR INNOVATION IN WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

WORK SAFE ALBERTA

The winners of the 2006 Awards for Innovation in Workplace Health and Safety are:

- Award of Distinction: Colin Scholze
- Award of Merit: HBM Canada Inc. (Calgary)

A tank filler invented by Colin Scholze of Rimbey, Alberta, consists of a pipe extension from the port on top of the tank to ground level. This device can be installed on existing tanks, and allows for venting and spill containment. A fill gauge eliminates any need to climb up onto the tank and peer inside. For more information, go to www.tankfiller.ca.

HBM Canada's highly visible electroluminescent fibre safety flag enhances safety for service vehicles that move around a site where large equipment is being operated. The large electroluminescent X is clearly visible, day and night. This safety device could also be used by cyclists and other vulnerable road users. For more information, go to www.hbmcanada.com.

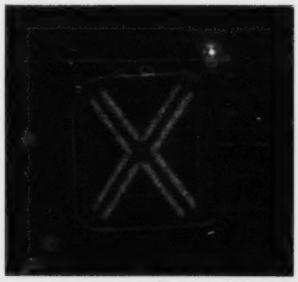


Photo by Jim Matei

The Annual Awards for Innovation in Workplace Health and Safety, administered by the Occupational Health and Safety Council, recognize the most innovative health and safety initiatives in Alberta workplaces over the previous year. All types of innovations relating to occupational health and safety are considered—including management of impairment issues, planning for safety at the design stage of projects and the use of engineering controls to replace the necessity for personal protective equipment.

The deadline for submitting applications for the 2007 awards is February 15, 2007.

For more information about the awards, visit www.whs.gov.ab.ca/whs-innovation.

## 5TH ANNUAL ALBERTA HEALTH & SAFETY CONFERENCE AND TRADE FAIR

"Health & Safety—A Balancing Act"
November 20 – 22, 2006
Shaw Conference Centre
Edmonton AB

Health and safety professionals have to meet the needs of workers and managers while ensuring that workplace policies and procedures fulfill the legislative requirements. This three-day annual event, organized by the Health & Safety Conference Society of Alberta, provides support and information through a wide range of educational sessions and extensive exhibits of the latest health, safety and environment products and services.

*For more information and registration details, visit www.hsconference.com, call (403) 236-2225 or e-mail at info@hsconference.com.*

## OH&S CODE UPDATE

In December 2002 the Occupational Health and Safety Act was amended to include an occupational health and safety code for detailed technical requirements, along with a provision for updating the code through public consultation every two years. The current (2005-06) review is near completion. Changes will likely be enacted before the end of the year, and will take effect three months after enactment. The changes will be published in the second edition of the Occupational Health and Safety Code, and posted at www.whs.gov.ab.ca/ohscode-review. An explanation guide and bulletin comparing the requirements of the first and second editions will also be made available.

## WORKSAFE SAM REMINDS YOU TO STRETCH

WorkSafe BC has created WorkSafe Sam, a desktop tool that regularly prompts office workers to stretch and take breaks. To find out more, go to www.worksafebc.com and select Safety at Work. Then choose Ergonomics from the Topics menu.

## INCIDENT COST CALCULATOR ON WHS WEBSITE

What does an incident really cost? Workplace Health & Safety's website, www.whs.gov.ab.ca, includes a calculator for small and medium-sized businesses. Click on Small Business and then on Incident Cost Calculator.

People who have had to deal with a serious workplace incident will confirm what this calculator shows—the costs are usually much greater than you might think.

## BRINGING HEALTH TO WORK

A recently created section of the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety's website provides "one-stop access to the resources needed to create a healthy workplace." Visit www.ccohs.ca and click on Bringing Health to Work.

## WORKPLACE SKILLS MUST INCLUDE LITERACY

(Reprinted with permission from "Letters," Edmonton Journal, May 1, 2006)

Friday, April 28, was designated a national day of mourning to remember and commemorate workers who have been killed or injured on the job.

Statistics Canada reports that 42 per cent of adult Canadians do not have the literacy skills they need to meet the ever-increasing demands of our information-based society and economy (based on the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey).

I wonder just how many of these tragic deaths and life-changing injuries were the result of literacy issues in the workplace.

I wonder, too, how many of our young workers who are injured or killed in the early days at their jobs were not adequately trained or literate enough to understand the training they did receive.

We need to work as a society to ensure that our workplaces are literacy friendly; that our safety manuals are easy to understand; that employers are supported to offer workplace essential skills programming; and ultimately that our workforce has the literacy skills needed to be safe on the job.

Literacy affects every aspect of our lives. Let's work together to ensure that safety on the work site does not continue to be a literacy issue.

*—Janet Lane, executive director, Literacy Alberta*

# ACCOMMODATING THE AGING WORKFORCE

**by Nordahl Flakstad**

When you order your double-double at the local coffee shop these days, chances are the server will be close to or beyond the traditional retirement age. Get used to it! Although Alberta's population is relatively young, the Canadian population overall is rapidly greying (see sidebar). Smart employers, therefore, are thinking about how they can actively recruit and retain older workers.

### Recognizing older workers as a valuable resource

"At practically every work site I inspect these days, I hear complaints about the difficulty in finding good workers," says Robert Gilchrist, an Alberta government occupational health and safety officer. Gilchrist recently gained some insights into this issue while serving as a member of an advisory committee that helped develop a guide to managing an aging workforce (see "For more information" below). He comments, "Keeping or hiring older workers—who may require some job modifications but on the other hand have a wealth of experience and skills—only makes sense. On a personal level, as I approach retirement age I see that I have considerable experience that is valuable to both my employer and my clients."

The retail sector is one area that is increasingly recognizing the value of older workers. Retailing traditionally has relied on hiring younger employees but currently faces severe challenges in attracting and keeping staff. P. Ross Bradford, acting President and CEO of Retail Alberta, says, "... older workers may represent less turnover, reduced retraining costs and more continuity of service, and therefore are good role models for younger workers. Older workers also have a better track record in terms of safety."

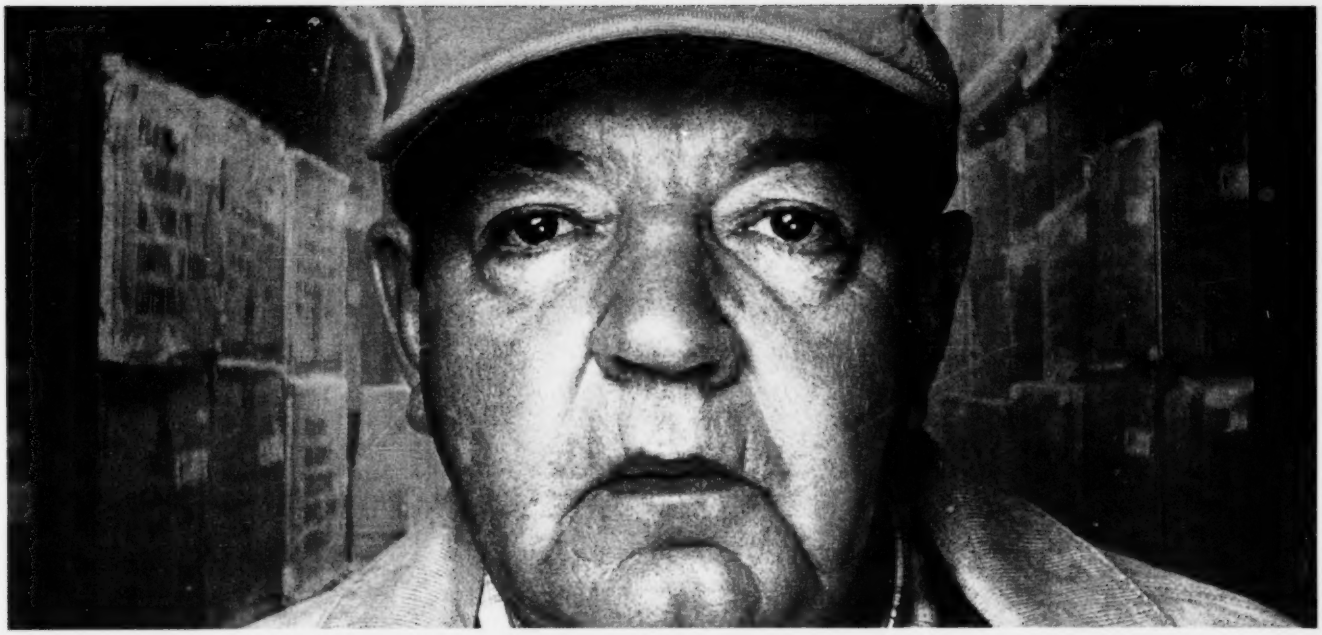
Data from Workers' Compensation Board-Alberta confirm Bradford's observation about older workers' safety records. While from 2000 to 2004 the average lost time claim rate declined for all Alberta workers, the rate for those 45 and older was lower than the overall average. And it continues to decline. (Statistics generally indicate, however, that the average post-injury recovery time is usually longer for older workers.)

In addition, employers and workers should remember that aging is not a disease but a biological process that starts at birth. Although the specific rate of aging varies greatly among individuals and may depend on lifestyle and fitness, in most cases muscle strength, motor skills (including movement of arms, hands and legs), hearing and visual acuity, and mental abilities don't deteriorate significantly or adversely impact work performance until people are in their 70s or even older.

> Typically, an employer needs only to introduce minor and inexpensive adjustments to working environments and procedures to better accommodate older employees.

### Meeting older workers' needs

Nonetheless, older workers who stay on the job (or return to the workforce) are likely to ask, "Will I continue to feel safe on the job and will work adversely affect my health?" Typically, an employer needs only to introduce minor and inexpensive adjustments to working environments and procedures to better accommodate older employees. For example, there may need to be changes to lighting, the positioning of workstations or tool and equipment design (see sidebar for details).



Some declining function can be offset through personal initiatives such as wearing corrective lenses or hearing devices. Other specific or general workplace adjustments can involve installing better lighting and reducing glare at workstations, entryways, steps and high-traffic areas.

A human resources manager with a major Canadian bank suggests that the cost of such tweaks probably averages about $500 per employee. And the returns are significant. Older workers are reassured about their on-the-job health and safety, and as Donald B. Macdonald of the ergonomic training and planning firm EWI Works states, people over 45 are not the only ones likely to benefit. "Any change you make for one person helps the whole population. Changes made for the older population can be the driver, but they will benefit everyone," says Macdonald, who is also an ergonomics consultant for the City of Calgary.

Nicky Buchanan, an environment, health and safety manager with Home Depot Canada, says that the building supply and hardware chain introduced hydraulic lift tables at its tool rental centres as a preventive measure for all employees and then found that older workers "certainly benefit from the tables, particularly since older workers can take longer to recover from back injuries." The tables, which raise objects to trunk height, help employees get heavy or odd-shaped tools into customers' cars without having to lift and twist.

> "Keeping or hiring older workers—who may require some job modifications but on the other hand have a wealth of experience and skills—only makes sense."

There's another good reason to make the necessary modifications. Alberta's human rights legislation requires

## DEMOGRAPHICS + HEATED UP ECONOMY = AN AGING WORKFORCE

- Baby boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964, are approaching retirement age.
- For several decades Canadians were retiring earlier, but there has been a very slight upward trend in the average retirement age in recent years. The average retirement age was 64.9 in 1976 but declined to 61.6 in 2000. Now, however, the percentage of employed Canadians 65 and older is growing at a faster rate than the percentage growth in the overall plus-65 population.
- Alberta's thriving economy and appealing lifestyle combine to attract youthful in-migration. This gives the province a younger workforce profile than Canada as a whole.

**Population Forecasts, 2011**

| | ALBERTA | CANADA |
|---|---|---|
| AGE 55-64 (% of total population) | 12 | 13 |
| AGE 45-54 (% of total population) | 15.5 | 16 |

Source: Statistics Canada

employers to make reasonable workplace adjustments to accommodate workers with special needs. That usually means workers with disabilities, but the "duty to accommodate" could also extend to meeting the needs of older workers.

**For more information**

*Safe and Healthy: A Guide to Managing an Aging Workforce* is available for downloading at www.alis.gov.ab.ca/pdf/cshop/safehealthy.pdf. Copies can also be purchased from the Alberta Learning Information Service, www.alis.gov.ab.ca.

Developed by Alberta Human Resources and Employment, this 44-page booklet will help managers and supervisors, some of whom are decades younger than their older employees, to better appreciate and respond to the challenges faced by aging workers.

*Nordahl Flakstad is an Edmonton writer and communications consultant.*

## RESOURCES

**WEB LINKS**

**www.alis.gov.ab.ca/pdf/cshop/safehealthy.pdf**
Alberta Human Resources and Employment: Guide to Managing an Aging Workforce

**www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/lp/spila/wlb/aw/01aging_workforce.shtml**
Government of Canada (HRSDC): Aging Workforce

**http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/econ/ib49_health.pdf**
AARP Public Policy Institute: Health and Safety Issues in an Aging Workforce

**www.microsoft.com/enable/aging/workforce.aspx**
Microsoft: Aging Workforce and Accessible Technology

# WORK SITE MODIFICATIONS FOR OLDER EMPLOYEES

### Vision and Lighting

The ability to adjust quickly to changing lighting conditions decreases with age. Older eyes are more affected by glare and have greater difficulty reading small print. Sharpness of vision, particularly for seeing moving objects, decreases with age.

| REMEMBER | SUGGESTED ACTIONS |
|---|---|
| Avoid sharp contrasts in lighting | Take particular care with lighting in and around steps, walkways, entryways and parking lots. |
| Reduce or eliminate glare | Provide low-glare computer screens.<br>Use several lighting sources rather than one big light.<br>Install blinds and awnings. |
| Provide clear controls and displays | Make sure control screens are well lit and have good contrast.<br>Avoid "screen clutter." |
| Position lighting properly | Provide individually adjustable lighting, if possible. |
| Print material clearly | Use clear fonts that are large enough (at least 12-point). Avoid glossy or laminated paper. Lettering on white background is usually easier to read<br>Place signs at eye level for easier reading with bifocals. |

### Hearing and Sound

Workers may be affected by gradual age-related hearing loss, particularly of higher-pitched sounds.

| REMEMBER | SUGGESTED ACTIONS |
|---|---|
| Reduce general noise level and eliminate unwanted noise | Install sound-absorbing material.<br>Shield machine noises.<br>Minimize air-conditioning noise.<br>Provide appropriate hearing protection. |
| Ensure that "wanted" sounds and signals can be heard | Use backup warning systems, such as lights and vibration systems, along with audible alarms.<br>Encourage use of hearing aids/protection, if required. |

### Grip and Handling

Grip strength gradually decreases with age. Conditions such as arthritis affect workers of all ages but may be more common in older workers.

| REMEMBER | SUGGESTED ACTIONS |
|---|---|
| Provide appropriate tools and equipment | Provide easily held and lighter tools.<br>Use mechanically powered tools.<br>Provide gloves that improve grip and leverage.<br>Use easier-to-control levers and knobs. |

# PARTNER VIOLENCE YES, IT'S A WORKPLACE ISSUE

**by Marilyn Buchanan**

Partner violence that follows a person to work is one of the fastest-growing types of workplace violence, and statistics from Canada and the U.S. indicate that partner violence accounts for the majority of women killed in the workplace. As well, the Commonwealth Fund has found that one in three women will be a victim of partner violence at some point in her life. (A few men are also victims of some partner violence at work.)

In other words, it is a certainty that partner violence is affecting employees in every workplace. Whether it's a threatening phone call, repeated absences due to injury or decreased productivity as a result of stress, partner violence is a pervasive force.

Here are some examples of what victims have said about how partner violence has affected them at work. "I took time off to enable the bruising to go away." "I resigned—I was too ashamed to face my co-workers with my injuries."

Until a few years ago, partner violence was a forbidden topic. It was addressed only by close family members, law enforcement officers or the courts. Nobody spoke about it at work. However, companies are now clearly recognizing that they must take steps to educate employees and help victims. The reality is that partner violence is both a community and a workplace issue. It has an adverse and disruptive effect on worker morale and on customers' perceptions of the company and its premises. Partner violence is also costing organizations millions of dollars. Its effects are associated with many direct and indirect costs, including decreased productivity, increased health care costs, absenteeism, errors, employee turnover and time spent away from work to cope with problems.

The Family Violence Prevention Fund provides these statistics from a survey of business leaders' views on this matter.

- 33% believed that partner violence has a negative effect on their bottom line.
- 40% were aware of employees affected by partner violence.
- 66% said they believed their company's financial performance would benefit from addressing the issue of partner violence.

In addition, employers have a legal responsibility to prevent and respond to partner violence against their employees if it occurs in the workplace. When an abuser shows up at work, everyone is at risk. The Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code requires that employers develop a policy and procedures to deal with workplace violence. These procedures and policies must be in writing and available to workers.

All employers should think about taking action on this issue. For example, they could:

- develop policies and prevention strategies that educate and inform the workforce about the company's commitment to addressing partner violence
- create a multi-disciplinary team to address partner violence issues
- carefully consider intervention efforts that will minimize or remove the risks
- educate-inform-educate-inform

*Marilyn Buchanan, BA, CRSP, is a consultant specializing in human behaviours such as workplace violence and substance abuse prevention. To contact her, send an e-mail to safetycorner@hotmail.com.*

**REFERENCES**

http://web1.tor.fastvibe.com/cws/wcpfv/monday/dennis_butler.pdf
"Knowledge to Practice to Impact." Presentation by Dennis Butler at the World Health Organization Conference on Domestic Violence in Banff (November 2005).

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/familyviolence/html/femgchange_e.html
D. Denham & J. Gillespie (1992). Wife Abuse: A Workplace Issue. A Guide for Change. Public Health Agency of Canada.

# THE IMPACT OF PARTNER VIOLENCE

**The victim**

- 74% of women who are victims of partner violence are harassed at work by their abuser.
- 37% of those involved in partner violence felt its impact reflected in lateness, missed work, difficulty keeping a job and difficulty advancing in careers.
- 25% of workplace problems are rooted in partner violence.
- Up to 50% of victims have lost a job due, at least in part, to domestic violence.
- 96% of employed victims experience problems at work related to their abuse or abuser.

**The abuser**

- Most abusers report being distracted and preoccupied at work.
- Some abusers make costly and dangerous mistakes at work.
- Most abusers use company phones, e-mail and company vehicles to perpetrate partner violence.
- Most abusers are granted paid work time to go to court.

**The co-worker**

Domestic violence also affects co-workers. As ... perceived danger increases for one employee, the level of distraction and fear for co-workers increases.

**Co-workers may:**

- have to fill in for absent or non-productive workers
- feel resentful of victims who need time off or receive extra attention
- try to "protect" victims from unwanted phone calls, visits, etc.
- be completely unaware of how to intervene, often feeling helpless and distracted from their own work
- fear for their own safety
- hear and/or take part in gossip and rumours

**The employer**

Employers have a unique opportunity to address domestic violence by providing tools, assistance and resources for employees. If an otherwise valuable member of your team has inexplicably become less productive, it could be that something else is causing the problem.

**Signs to note include:**

- increased absences or tardiness
- poor concentration and errors, slow and/or inconsistent work
- high anxiety and/or fearfulness
- requests for special accommodation, such as leaving early
- unusual quietness or isolation from others
- emotional distress or flatness; tearfulness or depression
- sensitivity about home life, or hints of trouble at home

## RESOURCES

**WEB LINKS**

**www.alis.gov.ab.ca/tips/archive.asp?EK=7759**
Alberta Government: Employment Tips

**www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/familyviolence/index.html**
Public Health Agency of Canada: National Clearinghouse on Family Violence

**www.endabuse.org/workplace/display.php?DocID=33002**
Family Violence Prevention Fund information

**www.gov.mb.ca/wd/pdf_files/dvbook.pdf**
Government of Manitoba: Domestic Violence Prevention: A Workplace Initiative

**www.caepv.org/**
Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence

# INFLUENZA PANDEMICS

## IS YOUR WORKPLACE PREPARED?

**by Mary Anne Gorman**

The experts agree we are overdue for a pandemic of influenza. At the height of a pandemic, employers may see up to 35 per cent of workers either at home sick, caring for ill family members or in the hospital. There may be more who are just too afraid to come to work.

The good news is that global, national, provincial and local governments are refining plans to help businesses, health care systems and individuals cope. The planning process will apply not only to pandemics, but also to other emergencies affecting large numbers of people.

### Why prepare?

History is our crystal ball. Since the 1500s, the pandemic spread of influenza has happened three or four times per century. Three pandemics of varying severity plagued the 1900s. The most recent was the Hong Kong Flu in 1968, and scientists urge us to take warning.

> "An influenza pandemic will affect virtually all of society."

Certain criteria must be met for an influenza virus to become a human pandemic explains Dr. Mark Joffe, an infectious diseases specialist who teaches medicine at the University of Alberta. "It must be a new strain, one that is able to infect humans and one that spreads easily from person to person," Joffe says. "So far, we haven't seen this with the H5N1 (bird flu) virus. However, if this virus mutates or combines with another virus and becomes capable of spreading among people, a human pandemic will result."

While it is not known when the next pandemic will arrive, or what the strain will be, outbreaks are expected to occur in multiple locations and in several waves. "In 1918 the Spanish Flu infected 20 to 40 million people over a six-month period," Joffe says. "Today, we have six times the population and faster travel, so viruses have the potential to spread more quickly. On the positive side, we have better monitoring systems and communications technology to help us prepare and plan."

### Alberta government prepares

The provincial government's pandemic planning began as early as 1999. According to Dr. Karen Grimsrud, Alberta's deputy provincial health officer, the benefits of these planning initiatives have already been observed. "During SARS, we had a ready-made plan as well as a network of people to consult," she says.

The provincial preparedness strategy is led by Alberta Health and Wellness, with Emergency Management Alberta providing coordination and support. A deputy ministers' pandemic influenza committee is addressing the complex cross-government planning that must occur to prepare the province as a whole.

"Our current planning reflects that, although a pandemic is a public health emergency, it could rapidly escalate to a general emergency capable of disrupting essential services to the public," says Grimsrud.

Two new sections will soon be added to the provincial pandemic plan. One covers the use of antiviral medication during an influenza pandemic; the other provides details on non-medical interventions such as self-care, the use of masks, when to close schools and when to quarantine.

### Keeping business running

Health regions across the province are developing strategies to respond to an increased demand for health services during a pandemic, as well as the expected rise in illness and absenteeism among health workers. However,

a flu pandemic will have an impact on more than just the health care system.

"An influenza pandemic will affect virtually all of society," says Dr. Brent Friesen, medical officer of health, Calgary Health Region. "Therefore, we are working with municipalities and businesses so they will understand what the impact of a pandemic will be, and to help them prepare."

Provincial health regions, Emergency Management Alberta and municipalities encourage businesses to take an "all-hazards" approach to planning for a pandemic. That means the business continuity planning undertaken for pandemic planning will also apply to other emergencies. The first step is to identify the essential services necessary to remain in business. Next, employers should determine the knowledge and skills required of the people who carry out those services and provide the necessary back-up training.

The first step is to identify the essential services necessary to remain in business. Next, employers should determine the knowledge and skills required of the people who carry out those services and provide the necessary back-up training.

"When pandemic flu vaccine is available, employees providing critical services such as health care, electricity, heating, power generation and telecommunications would be vaccinated first. Companies should identify the workers who would have priority to receive the vaccine," Friesen advises.

### Controlling infection

In addition to defining essential services, the most important thing employers can do to maintain business continuity during a pandemic is to reinforce common-sense workplace infection control practices. "Practices such as staying home when you are sick and washing your hands sound almost too simple," Grimsrud says, "but they are still the most effective public health measures we have to decrease the transmission of viruses."

People are reminded to cover their mouths when coughing or sneezing and not to spit on the sidewalk. Because the flu is spread via large droplets and can live on surfaces for up to 48 hours, health experts recommend a social distance of one metre between people. Waterless, alcohol-based hand rubs are useful as well, for hand washing and to wipe down surfaces such as desks or stair rails in the work area.

Each workplace will have to assess the costs and benefits of its infection control measures, Friesen suggests. "For example, health organizations may provide waterless cleaners at all times, whereas a business may opt to use them only when there is increased pandemic risk or in public entry areas only. Another measure a company might decide to take is to limit the number of regularly scheduled meetings to minimize bringing people together."

The bottom line? "Approach a pandemic the way you would any other hazard—make a business continuity plan," advises Doug Forge of Emergency Management Alberta. "If you're looking for information, go to the many credible sources that are available. The more you know, the better you can prepare."

*Mary Anne Gorman is an Edmonton writer and editor.*

## RESOURCES

### WEB LINKS

**REGIONAL**

**www.capitalhealth.ca/EspeciallyFor/PandemicInfluenza**
Under Businesses, look for 10 Steps Your Business Can Take to Prepare and a checklist.

**www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/pandemic/resources.htm**
Calgary Health Region's Downloadable Posters and Planning Guide

**PROVINCIAL**

**www.hre.gov.ab.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB_pe001.pdf**
Pandemic and Your Business

**www.hre.gov.ab.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB_pe002.pdf**
Pandemic: What If ... Questions and Answers Relating to Work in Alberta

**www.aspenrha.com/images/stories/pdf/pandemic/fs_pandemic.pdf**
Alberta Pandemic Influenza Fact Sheet

**www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/ema_index.htm**
Emergency Management Alberta—Business Continuity Plans

**OTHER**

**www.who.int**
World Health Organization

### IN THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT LIBRARY – LABOUR BUILDING

For contact information, see page 17.

**Handwashing: Avoiding Germs and Viruses at Work (Video)**
Teach your employees how to avoid spreading germs. (VC 0419)

# WASH YOUR HANDS

[Excerpts from Alberta Health and Wellness booklet, "It's in Your Hands," www.health.gov.ab.ca/influenza/SC_booklet.html]

Next to immunization, the single most important way to prevent influenza is frequent hand washing.

**WASH YOUR HANDS:**

**Before**

- handling or eating food or feeding others
- brushing or flossing teeth
- inserting or removing contact lenses
- treating wounds or cuts

**After**

- having any contact with a person who has influenza or their immediate environment
- going to the toilet or changing a diaper
- blowing your nose or wiping a child's nose
- coughing or sneezing
- handling garbage
- treating wounds or cuts

Children should wash their hands after playing with toys shared with other children.

**HOW TO WASH YOUR HANDS**

- Use regular soap. Antibacterial soap is not necessary. Alcohol hand rubs are also effective.
- Rub hands vigorously together for at least 15 seconds, covering all surfaces.
- Rinse under running water.
- Dry with a clean or disposable towel.

If using a public restroom, use a disposable towel to turn off the faucet to avoid further contact with the tap.

# CAPP STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

**by Alf Cryderman**

The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers defines stewardship as a commitment to continuously improving their approach to environment, health and safety, and social performance. It means doing business in a way that ensures the long-term sustainability of the industry. As well, it involves using basic tools and training to improve health and safety while gathering credible data to illustrate the industry's progress.

Brian Maynard, vice-president of stewardship and public affairs for CAPP, says "Stewardship is absolutely critical, and you can never be satisfied. We are making progress, but it's not easy with the industry so busy. We're bringing in a lot of new people, and there is no question that it is hazardous out there."

Maynard's comments come at a time of record activity in the oil patch, with most companies working at maximum capacity, often with labour shortages. By its nature the oil patch can be a dangerous place to work. Weather, fatigue, inexperienced workers, driver safety, and drug and alcohol impairment are all issues CAPP members must continually confront. And with the increased activity comes more interaction with stakeholders as well as closer scrutiny by industry regulators and the public.

> "Our members know the data they report is compiled to create industry statistics that become public in our annual progress reports."

Despite that, since the CAPP Stewardship initiative started in 1999, the data shows there are fewer incidents. "We want to see that trend continue down," says Maynard. "It's a commitment to how we do business—never being satisfied with the status quo. We can do better, and will do better, by continuously improving."

"There's no one silver bullet to make everything better," Maynard says. "It's a combination of slowly changing people's attitudes and making people aware of the consequences of their actions. It also requires a really significant commitment by a company's senior executives, and it helps to tie rewards to safety performance. We have a senior executives' task force that works on how to make safety a bigger priority and demonstrate that the industry is committed to safety from the top down."

Every year CAPP publishes a stewardship progress report to show what association members are doing and how they compare to previous years. An annual benchmarking report (both are available on the CAPP website) guides members in collecting their data in an efficient and consistent manner. Annual awards are given to members who excel in their stewardship activities. As well, CAPP works with other industry safety groups like ENFORM and sponsors additional programs, like Energy in Action and Safety Stand-down Week (see sidebar) that tie into the stewardship initiative.

Also part of stewardship:

- increased participation in stakeholder forums
- research into newer, safer and more efficient technology
- developing and using best management practices
- more and higher-level safety training sessions
- using outside experts to measure and evaluate performance

The most recent national figures from CAPP show success in lowering incident rates (see sidebar) and in terms of increased positive interaction with stakeholders and the public. But, Maynard says, "We're in early days." The industry can't make everyone happy. "We do make mistakes, and we have to be honest about that," he notes. "But if we have open and honest communication, we can do better—first, by acknowledging and understanding what we've done wrong, and second, by learning from it and doing better the next time."

There are many examples of stewardship in action. Stewardship inspired BP Canada Energy to initiate a new health and safety program. In one year safety observations tripled and the company had 55 per cent fewer recordable injuries. Since 2001 NAL Resources Limited reduced lost time incidents for their contractors by 80 per cent. They've won awards within and outside the indust for their safety program. The secret of their success, says Jonathan Lexier, NAL Resource's chief operating officer and chair of the CAPP stewardship committee, is threefold: ensuring that everyone in the company buys in, improving training

and supervision, and rewarding success. "When mistakes are made, learn from them with no retribution. It doesn't happen overnight and you work at continuously improving."

"The stewardship initiative, which was voluntary until 2002, is now a condition of membership," says Lexier. "Many other industry associations don't require members to comply with their programs in order to remain members. CAPP does. Compliance is not an option. The annual stewardship progress report is meaningful and increasingly critical to everyone in the industry."

"I think what makes stewardship work is that our members know the data they report is compiled to create industry statistics that become public in our annual progress reports," Lexier says. "That data also becomes a benchmark and a basis for discussion on how to improve next time. Have we improved? Yes and no. We still need to work at it. Some of our members don't understand stewardship as well as they need to."

Wally Baer is executive director of Compliance, Workplace Health & Safety, and Employment Standards with Alberta Human Resources and Employment. He has 20 years experience in work site health and safety with the Worker's Compensation Board-Alberta and the provincial government. Recently, CAPP asked him to join their advisory committee, and he was a judge for their Stewardship Awards for 2005.

Baer says, "I'm thoroughly impressed with CAPP's stewardship program. To me it shows the industry is accepting its responsibility to gain the public trust. However, not all companies are at the same stage of development, and CAPP members cover a wide spectrum, from local to multi-national companies."

"The oil and gas industry carries some baggage from the old days when things like safety and environmental protection were not top priorities," Baer adds. "The industry is saying it's a new day; we are changing and trying hard and doing a lot more than speaking brave words. I think the industry knows they have to produce results that are public and verifiable."

For CAPP and its 150 Canadian members, successful stewardship means a commitment to developing gas and oil resources in a safe and environmentally responsible way. By publicly reporting their environmental, health and safety, and social performance, they demonstrate to members, partners and stakeholders (including contractors, investors, landowners, and First Nations and rural communities) that they are morally and socially responsible, and that they care. Stewardship is working.

For more information, visit CAPP's website at www.capp.ca.

*Alf Cryderman is a freelance writer based in Red Deer.*

ENERGY IN ACTION

## SAFETY STAND-DOWN WEEK

CAPP and nine other oil industry and safety associations annually sponsor Safety Stand-down Week (in 2007, January 16 - 21). The idea is to set aside a time for senior executives and managers to talk about safety, face to face with frontline workers.

Actual timing and organization of the event is left up to each company. What's important is that employers make time for workers to hear the safety message directly from senior management, not trickling down through the organization. Some companies shut down part of their operation for an hour or a day to reinforce the importance of safety. Having a safety break at the work site while the company's chief executive officer discusses the issue is a powerful way to get workers' attention, especially if they are new on the job.

Increasingly popular within the oil and gas industry, Safety Stand-down Week is now highlighting a commitment to safety in other industries as well.

For more information, go to www.safetystanddown.ca.

## THE CAPP NUMBERS:

TOTAL RECORDABLE INJURY FREQUENCY AND FATALITIES

- Total recordable injury frequency for CAPP employees in 2004 was 1.00 injuries per 200,000 exposure hours, down from 1.34 in 2003.
- For contractors the rate was 1.91 injuries per 200,000 exposure hours, down 25 per cent since 1999.
- The combined figure for employees and contractors for 2004 is 1.65, the lowest it's been in the six years of the program.
- Industry fatality data is not collected now, although that is under review. However, in 2004 in Alberta, 14 fatalities were recorded, down 7 from 2003 and the lowest since 2000.

### RESOURCES

**WEB LINKS**

**www.energy.gov.ab.ca/docs/newsroom/pdfs/Speech2005CAPP_Awards.pdf**
Minister of Energy's Speech, 2005 CAPP Stewardship Awards Dinner

**www.nal.ca/media/nal_stewardship06.pdf**
NAL (member company) Stewardship Report

# PARTNERSHIPS NEWS

### New Partner in Health and Safety

Welcome to the Alberta Occupational Safety Auditors Association, Calgary. The primary objective of this new Calgary-based professional organization, www.aosau.ca, is to promote the health and safety auditing profession across Canada by providing its members with a meeting place and ongoing professional development.

Partners are recognized as leaders in their industry. Through a Memorandum of Understanding, Partners commit to taking a proactive role in promoting workplace health and safety throughout Alberta. The MOU outlines the Partner's role in promoting the Partnerships program and assisting others with their health and safety systems and needs.

### 2005 PIR Refunds Reach $68 Million

In May 2006, the Workers' Compensation Board-Alberta refunded a record $68 million to the approximately 5,900 Certificate of Recognition holders registered in the Partners in Injury Reduction program for 2005. The total PIR refund for COR holders over the past six years has surpassed $242 million.

### Strategic Planning

A Strategic Planning working group that includes representation from Partners, Certifying Partners, WCB-Alberta and Alberta Human Resources and Employment is developing a new three-year strategic plan for Partnerships in Health and Safety. On October 26, 2006, approximately 75 Partners, Certifying Partners, Certificate of Recognition holders and other stakeholders will meet in Edmonton to further develop the working group's proposed draft strategies. A final draft of the plan will then be forwarded to the Minister of Human Resources and Employment for approval. For more information about the strategic planning process, contact Rob Feagan at rob.feagan@gov.ab.ca.

### Selecting an Auditor: Due Diligence

In the latter part of 2006 a record number of external audits will be conducted in the Partnerships program. If you are one of the many employers currently planning a certification or re-certification audit, you will need to ensure that the auditor you select is in good standing with your Certifying Partner. Some Certifying Partners provide a list of auditors; if this is the case, be sure you have the most current list available.

Partnerships in HEALTH and SAFETY

Partnerships in Health and Safety is a non-regulatory, province-wide injury prevention program sponsored cooperatively by government, labour and industry. The program offers:

- tools to implement a health and safety management system
- guidance in applying for a Certificate of Recognition (COR)
- potential for premium refunds from the Workers' Compensation Board-Alberta

For more information, call the Partnerships Hotline at 1-866-415-8690 or visit www.whs.gov.ab.ca/whs-partnerships.

# NEW TOOLS FOR AN OLD ISSUE

**by Bob Christie**

Anybody who has ever been within shouting distance of Health and Safety has heard the word "compliance." However, identifying the compliance issue and making sure it is resolved are two vastly different sides of a very problematic coin.

Recently I was approached by Ben Snyman, who has joined forces with MediaLogic in Calgary. Media Logic, in business for a decade, is famous for a product called Natural Re.Source that provides a huge regulatory, legislative and policy online library for the resource industries and boasts over 2,000 clients. Ben's product, called e-compliance, is slated to be the fourth pillar in the growing technological empire of Leanne Forbes and her team at MediaLogic.

E-compliance is not yet ready for release (the rollout date is currently set for September 1, 2006), but I did see an online beta test. While the screen design leaves room for improvement, these folks are clearly onto an idea that may well prevent audits from becoming dust collectors. The product is a tool that not only tracks the triggering event (an audit, a hazard identification, an incident or near miss or even a routine inspection) but also makes recommendations, assigns corrective actions and tracks the satisfactory completion of those actions. The product is not document or event-specific. Right now, they are working with the Partnerships audit document, but it would not be difficult to build the detail required by any of the certifying partners or other loss control systems.

Even if the triggering event has no downstream consequences, the simple fact of following the procedures and keeping detailed documents of any actions and follow-up goes a long way toward demonstrating the due diligence necessary in an increasingly complex regulatory environment.

You can reach Ben Snyman at ben@ecompliance.ca and Leanne Forbes at forbes@medialogic.ca.

*Bob Christie is a partner at Christie Communications Ltd., a multimedia development company in Edmonton. Bob supplies most of the web link resources for the articles in this magazine.*

## WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY

**Contact us any time**
For occupational health and safety information and assistance, or to order Workplace Health & Safety publications, phone the Contact Centre at 1-866-415-8690 toll free in Alberta (415-8690 in Edmonton and area) or visit www.whs.gov.ab.ca/whs-contact.

WORK SAFE ALBERTA

**Sign up for Workplace Health & Safety news**
To be notified by e-mail of all new Workplace Health & Safety website postings, sign up for a FREE subscription service through www.whs.gov.ab.ca/whs-subscribe.

**Alberta Government Library - Labour Building Site**
To review the large selection of occupational health and safety information materials available through the Alberta government, go to www.hre.gov.ab.ca/library.

To borrow materials, either contact your local library and make your requests through the inter-library loan system or visit the Alberta Government Library:

**3rd floor, 10808-99 Avenue**
**Edmonton, AB T5K 0G5**

**Library phone** (780) 427-8533

**Audio-Visual Services phone** (780) 427-4671

To reach either of the above numbers toll-free in Alberta, dial 310-0000 followed by the area code and phone number.

**Library fax** (780) 422-0084

Workplace Health & Safety is an Alberta Human Resources and Employment program that falls under the jurisdiction of Minister Mike Cardinal.

# A tip of the hard hat to Alberta's Best Safety Performers

Work Safe Alberta is a joint industry, labour and government initiative to promote workplace health and safety awareness and education. We're proud to honour these safety leaders for 2005.

## Large Business

1131435 Alberta Ltd. Etal
521855 Alberta Ltd.
823786 Alberta Ltd. & 2000 Plus
A.G. Clark Holdings Ltd.
& Giebelhaus Developments
Abalone Construction Services
ABB Inc.
Academy Construction & Maintenance Ltd.
ACE Construction Company Inc.
Acuren Group Inc.
Aecon Construction Group Inc.
AGAT Laboratories Ltd.
Alberta Boilers Safety Association
Alberta Energy And Utilities Board
Albi Homes Ltd
Albian Sands Energy Inc.
ALCO Gas & Oil Production Equipment Ltd.
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All-Fab Building Components Inc.
Alliance Pipeline Ltd.
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Altair Contracting Ltd.
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Amcor PET Packaging Canada, Inc.
Anadarko Canada Corporation
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Arcis Corporation
Aron Services (2003) Ltd.
ATCO Midstream Ltd.
ATCO Pipelines
ATCO Power Canada Ltd.
B G E Service & Supply Ltd
B.& R. Eckel's Transport Ltd.
Baker Hughes Canada Company
Baker Hughes Division Centrilift
Beairsto Lehners Ketchum Engineering Ltd.
Bear Slashing Ltd.
Beattie Homes Ltd.
Bel-MK Engineering Ltd.
Ber-Mac Electrical & Instrumentation Ltd.
Blue Sky & Neighbours Canada
Borealis Electrical & Controls Ltd.
Bowen Workforce Solutions Inc.
BP Canada Energy Company
Briarwood Daylighting Ltd.
Bunge Canada Holdings I ULC
Burnco Management Company Ltd.
C B S Construction Ltd
C.J. El Corporation & Royco Holdings
Calgary Co-Operative Association Ltd.
Camrose County
Canadian Forest Products Ltd.
Canadian Helicopters Limited
Canem Systems Ltd.
Canetic Resources Inc.
Capital Care Group
Cardel Construction Ltd.
Carnwood Wireline Service Ltd.
Carson Welding & Maintenance Ltd.
Cat Tech Canada Company
CCS Inc.
Challenger Geomatics Ltd.
Champion Technologies Ltd.
Charles Dei Construction Ltd.
Chemco Electrical Contractors
Christopher's Welding Ltd O/A Clw
Cimarron Engineering Ltd.
Clayburn Refractories Ltd
Clearwater Recovery Systems Inc
Coal Valley Resources Inc.
Colt Engineering Corporation
Colt Geomatic Solutions Ltd.
Comco Pipe & Supply Company
Commonwealth Construction Canada
Communications Group Fort Mcmurray Ltd.
Communications Group Red Deer
Compass Directional Services Ltd
Compton Petroleum Corporation
Comstock Canada Limited
Concours Collision Centres Ltd
Continental Stress
Convergint Technologies Ltd.
County of Mountain View
County of St. Paul No. 19
County Of Stettler No. 6
Cow Harbour Construction Ltd.
Criterion Catalysts & Technologies
Canada Inc.
Cross Contracting Inc.
D & R Pipeline & Oilfield Construction Ltd.
Daishowa-Marubeni International Ltd.
Peace River Pulp
Dannburg Holdings Corporation
Denim Pipeline Inc.
Design Group Staffing Inc.
Destiny Resource Services Partnership
Devon ARL Corporation
Dominion Construction Company Inc.
Dominion Exploration Canada Ltd.
Dow Chemical Canada Inc.
Dresser-Rand Canada Inc.
Earth Tech Canada Inc.
Earthmaster Environmental Strategies Inc.
Edmonton Exchanger
& Refinery Services Ltd.
EDS Canada Inc.
Ellisdon Corporation
Emerson Electric Canada Limited
Emerson Electric Canada Limited
Enbridge Operational Services
Enbridge Pipelines Inc.
Enerflex Systems Ltd.
EnerMark Inc.
ENMAX Corporation
EPCOR Utilities Inc.
ESC Automation Inc.
Esprit Exploration Ltd.
Eveready Industrial Services Corporation
Excel Homes Limited Partnership
Expro Group Canada Inc.
Fairmont Hotels and Resorts
Firestone Energy Corporation
Flint Energy Services Ltd.
Fluor Canada, Ltd.
Focus Corporation
G.K. Projects Inc.
Galloway Oilfield Construction Ltd.
Gas City Drywall & Acoustic Ceilings Ltd.
GE Oil & Gas Canada
General Electric Canada Inc.& GE Energy
Genron Enterprises Ltd
Global Energy Services Ltd.
Golf Western Ltd.
Goodmen Roofing Ltd.
Graham Group Ltd.
Greenboro Homes Ltd.
Guthrie Mechanical Services Ltd.
H S E Intergrated Ltd.
Hagemeyer Canada Inc.
Halliburton Group Canada Inc.
Hatch Optima Ltd.
Hawthorn Interiors Ltd.
HCS Focus Ltd.
High Time Industries Ltd.
Highland Helicopters Ltd
Hinz Automation Inc.
HiTech Fluid Systems Ltd.
Hi-West
Hi-West Well Servicing (Lloydminster)
HJB Fabricators Ltd.
Honeywell Limited
Hood Packaging Corporation
Horizon Construction Management Ltd.
Horton CBI Limited
IKO Sales Limited
Import Tool Corporation Ltd.
Inland Pipe Limited
Innovative Chemical Technologies
Canada Ltd
Insituform Technologies Limited
InterBase Consultants Ltd.
IPSCO Inc.
IRISNDT Corporation
J & L Supply Co Ltd
Jacobs Canada Inc.
Jacobs Techa-West Engineering Ltd.
Jacques Whitford Limited
Johns Manville Canada Inc.
Keyera Energy Management Ltd.
Klassen Brothers Northern Ltd.
Klohn-Crippen Consultants Ltd.
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Lafarge Canada Inc.
Laird Electric Inc.
Lakeshore Sports Ltd.
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Lasso Maintenance Ltd.
Layton Bros. Construction Co. Ltd.
Ledcor Management Limited
Lockerbie & Hole Inc
Mammoet Canada Western Ltd.

2005 BEST SAFETY PERFORMER
WORK SAFE ALBERTA

For more information about how to qualify as a Best Safety Performer, visit worksafely.org and click on Workplace Health and Safety.

## Your commitment is working wonders.

worksafely.org 415-8690 (Edmonton area) 1-866-415-8690 (toll free outside Edmonton)

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Matrix Solutions Inc.
Maxxam Analytics Inc.
MBI Limited Smurfit-MBI Limited
McElhanney Land Surveys Ltd.
MCL Power Inc
McMurray Refrigeration Co. Ltd
Melloy Industrial Services Inc
Melloy Industrial Services Inc
M-I Drilling Fluids Canada, Inc.
Midlite Construction Ltd.
Mikisew Ltd
Millar Western Forest Products
Monad Industrial Constructors
Morrison Construction (1983) Ltd.
MPE Engineering Ltd
Nalco Canada Co.
National Oilwell Varco
Neegan Development Corporation
Neegan Technical Services Ltd.
Netook Construction Ltd.
Newalta Corporation
Newpark Canada Inc.
Nilex Inc.
Nortel Networks Limited
North American Construction Group Inc.
Northern Industrial Insulation Contractors Inc.
Northern Truck Services 1994 Ltd.
Northrock Resources Ltd.
Nova Chemicals Corporation
NuVista Homes Ltd.
O Connor Associates Environmental Inc
Pacer Management Services Corp
Pason Systems Corporation
PCL Construction Management Inc.
PCL Construction Resources Inc
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Penn West Petrolium Ltd.
Peter Kiewit Sons Co.
Phoenix Fence Inc.
Phoenix Technology Services
Pillar Resource Services Inc.
Pioneer Land Services Ltd.
Pioneer Natural Resources Canada
PMC (Nova Scotia) Company
Powercomm Inc.
Prairie North Construction Ltd.
Praxair Canada Inc.
Precision Drilling Corporation
Primewest Energy Inc.
Pro-Con Road Works Ltd.
Pumps & Pressure Inc.
Pyramid Corporation
Quadra Chemicals Ltd.
Qualico Developments West Ltd.
Quebecor Jasper Printing Inc.
Quinn Contracting Ltd.
Raymac Surveys Ltd
Read Jones Christoffersen Ltd
Red Deer County
Reid-Built Homes Ltd.
Reppsco Services Ltd.
Rife Resources Ltd.
RPS Energy Canada Ltd.
RTD Quality Services Inc.
Ryan Energy Technologies
Schell Equipment Ltd.
Schlumberger Canada Limited
Schneider Canada Inc.
Schneider Canada Inc.
Seisland Surveys Ltd.
Semcams
Sercel Canada Ltd.
Shanco Camp Services Ltd.
Smith International Canada, Ltd.
Spartan Controls Ltd.
Stepper Custom Homes Inc.
Stuart Olson Constructors Inc.
Studon Electric & Controls Inc
Sundre Forest Products Inc.
Swab-Co
Synergy Projects Ltd.
Tarpon Energy Services Ltd.
Tartan Construction Ltd.
Tenaris Global Services (Canad
Terracon Geotechnique Ltd.
Tesco Corporation
Thompson Contractors Inc.
TIC Canada Ulc
Tirecraft Auto Centers Ltd.
Tracer Industries Canada Limited.
Trico Developments Corporation
Trotter and Morton Limited
Tuboscope Pipeline Services Canada
Tyco Valves & Controls Canada Inc.
Ultraline Services Corporation
Unified Valve Ltd.
Univar Canada Ltd.
Universal Compression Canada Ltd Partnership
Urban Systems Ltd
VECO Construction Ltd.
Vetco Gray Canada Inc.
Vision Oilfield Projects Corporation
W.M. Schmidt Mechanical Contractors Ltd.
Waiward Steel Fabricators Ltd.
Waschuk Equipment Rentals Ltd
Weatherford Canada Partnership
Weir Canada Inc.
Westcor Services Limited
Western Inspection Ltd.
Wild Rows Pump & Compression Ltd.

## Small Business

345245 Alberta Ltd.
724041 Alberta Ltd.
824233 Alberta Ltd.O/A Frontier Distributors
Abalone Construction (Western)
ABB Inc.
Almor Testing Services Ltd.
Al-Terra Engineering Ltd.
Ameco Services Inc.
Anderson Well Servicing (1986) Ltd.
Arresting You Ltd.
Austin Powder Ltd.
Autopro Automation Consultants Inc.
B. Hinson Contracting Ltd.
B.W. Bouwman Plumbing Ltd.
BFI Canada Inc.
Boyd Exploration Consultants Ltd.
BPTEC-DNW Engineering Ltd.
Broadview Homes Alberta Ltd.
BSEI Engineering Inc.
BXL Bulk Explosives Limited
C. E. Management Ltd.
Canada Power Holdings Ltd
Canadian Wellhead Isolation Corp.
Canterbury Roofing Ltd.
Capital Pressure Ltd.
Centcom Construction Ltd.
Clark Builders
Classic Oilfield Service Ltd.
Clean Harbors Canada Inc.
Coil-Tech Services Division Of Big Eagle
Complete Rental Equipment Ltd.
Concord Drilling Fluids Ltd.
Contemporary Office Interiors Ltd
Continental Cartage Inc.
Cord Projects Ltd.
Cox Crane Services Ltd.
Crossland Transport Inc.
Cyntech Corporation
Deltec Power & Control Systems Ltd.
Diamond J Industries Ltd
Double T Equipment Manufacturing Ltd.
Dwayne Hommy Trucking Ltd.
Enbridge International Inc.
Enbridge Technology Inc.
Foothills Tank Rentals Ltd.
Frontier Engineering And Consulting Ltd
G. Mindus & Sons Holdings (1996) Ltd.
Gamma Industrial Surveyors & Contractors Ltd.
General Electric Canada Inc.& GE Energy
Genics Inc.
Gray Diamond Construction
Great Northern Plumbing Inc.
Hauser Construction (1986) Ltd
Hidden Lake Oilfield Services Ltd
Inland Aggregates Limited
Insituform Technologies Limited
Kaizen Environmental Services Inc.
KBL Land Use Consulting Ltd.
KD Trucking (1989) Ltd.
Kor-Alta Construction Ltd.
Kost Fire Equipment Ltd
L.V. Trucking Ltd. & Roses Well Services Ltd.
Lafarge Construction Materials N.A.R
Landtec Landscape Contractors
Lory Oilfield Rentals Inc.
Magnum Perforating Services Inc.
McElhanney Consulting Services
McMeekin Resources Ltd.
Michalchuk Bros. L. Contractor
Milepost Oilfield Services Ltd
Millar Western Industries Ltd.
Mitcham Canada Ltd.
Monarch Transport (1975) Ltd.
Morrow Environmental Consultants Inc.
Mullen Group Inc.
Myshak Sales & Rentals Ltd.
National Oilwell Varco
Neudorf Contracting Dp Ltd.
Norette Oil Field Services 2005 Inc.
North American Construction Group
Northwest Sanitation Ltd.
ProDrill Fluid Technologies
Prophit Management Ltd.
Pulse Data Inc.
Quintel Communications Ltd.
R. Bruce Erickson Construction Ltd.
RBI Canada 2000 Inc.
Redwater Machining & Manufacturing Co. Ltd.
Remus Trenching Ltd.
RKM Contracting Ltd.
RKR Recharge Center Ltd.
Seacor Environmental Inc.
Seletech Electrical Enterprise Ltd.
Serv-All Mechanical Services Ltd
Snell & Oslund Surveys (1979)
SPM Flow Control Ltd.
Stewart Construction (1996) Ltd
Sum-Canada Enterprises Ltd.
Supreme Steel Ltd. - Bridge Division
Telba Oilfield Rentals Ltd.
Terry Stenberg Oilfield Services (1988) Ltd.
Thermal Systems KWC Ltd.
Three Sisters Mountain Village Ltd.
Thunder Energy Inc.
Timberbound Construction Ltd.
Today's Homes Inc.
Trail-Braker Trucking Ltd
Transit Paving Inc.
Trimax Residuals Management In
Triple H Construction Ltd.
Tri-Vax Enterprises Ltd.
Universal Flooring Systems Ltd.
URS Canada Inc.
Val Con Partitions Ltd
Valley C Construction Ltd
Vector Construction Ltd.
Wallis Bros. Construction Ltd.
Walters Chambers & Associates
Western Fiberglass Pipe Sales Ltd.
Wiebe Transport Inc.
Wil Mechanical (1995) Ltd.
Wild Card Enterprises Ltd

Alberta

# A LEGACY OF SAFETY

## STRUCTURAL STEEL ERECTION BEST PRACTICES MANUAL

**by Kerry Tremblay**

The death of an Alberta ironworker and the serious injury of two of his co-workers in June 2002 triggered an unusual chain of events that has become a legacy of safety.

That legacy, dedicated to the memory of James (Smitty) Smith, is a deliberately small manual—it's not much bigger than a man's hand. The contents of the Structural Steel Erection Best Practices manual, published in May 2006, range from ensuring there's a site-specific structural steel erection plan to working with cranes and the necessity of fall protection.

James (Smitty) Smith, 46, a welder with 25 years of experience as an ironworker, was working on a gymnasium addition in Edmonton when he and two fellow ironworkers climbed out on a joist to connect another beam and its cross-bracing. The joist they were on flipped and buckled. It tossed the three men down onto the concrete below, and then landed on Smith, who was killed. One of the other men, Travis Houston, is in a wheelchair because of his injuries. The third, Shain Anstey, is back at work as an ironworker. None of the workers was wearing fall protection equipment.

Funding for the best practices manual came from Rampart Steel, the company that employed the workers when the incident occurred. When Rampart Steel was charged under the Occupational Health & Safety Act, rather than paying the $94,000 fine into Alberta's general coffers, the company, its lawyers and the prosecutors suggested a different and unusual option to Justice D.J. Tilley. They asked that the money be used to fund the work of a committee that would communicate recommended practices for erecting structural steel in the construction industry. The judge agreed. The goal was to prevent similar tragedies in the future.

The cause was helped when, in 2004, the province changed the rules on fall protection for ironworkers. They were no longer exempt from wearing the equipment. The combination has resulted in a manual that isn't on the shelf. It's in demand.

Rampant President Paul Sommerville says he's pleased with the pocket manual. "Safety is something every company, every worker should be concerned with at all times. In many cases we have been too reliant on doing the job the old way. This manual takes a critical look at steel erection and has come up with recommendations that combine the best of the old ways and new modern methods to provide a safer, practical guide for our industry."

Sommerville likes that the manual is inclusive. Everybody's point of view was considered and is reflected in the 53 pages. Created under the umbrella of the Manufacturers' Health & Safety Association, the manual was developed by a team of ironworkers who work with the steel, fabricators who make the steel, company owners, engineers, the ironworkers' union, trainers and OH&S personnel. The result, Sommerville says, is a user-friendly guide that has been endorsed by 12 key associations and recommended to be included as part of the NAIT apprenticeship program for ironworkers.

Having so many associations backing the guide, Sommerville says, "makes it easier for people to take safety seriously." In the past, he says, ironworkers prided themselves on their ability to "walk the iron" and perform a job few others could. "Even though times and methods are changing, ironworking remains a challenging and demanding occupation. This guide sets out the premise that everyone involved in a project is responsible for safety, and then references Alberta's Act, regulation and code to back up the point."

> "We brought contractors and owners into the picture, and now just about everybody's tied into it, with the endorsement of different associations and the ironworkers' unions."

Committee chair Don Oborowsky, president of Waiward Steel Fabricators Ltd., had a personal reason for making sure the guide was useful. "I fell once, in 1969, from 20 feet. It could have been fatal." The danger is still there, he says, at every job site. In North America in 2005, he says, 19 ironworkers were killed, and of those, 13 weren't tied off (using fall protection). "We kill somebody here in Alberta," he says, "every two-and-a-half to three days (from all incidents, in all industries). It's not pretty ... there are a whole lot of people affected when one person dies on the job."

"I have to be involved," Oborowsky continues. "It's our industry, our world. And it's important. I've been in the structural steel business for 35 years. It's one of the most dangerous businesses in Alberta." He's also on the board of directors for WCB-Alberta, chair of the Manufacturers' Health & Safety Association and active on over 30 other boards and committees

Oborowsky is pleased with the result of the more than 700 hours of volunteer time taken to distil the message in

Photo courtesy of Waiward Steel

the best practices manual. "This was a super project team," he says. "It's a good-looking book that's an odd shape, so it doesn't get lost. It's not boring, and it's easy to read." He's especially proud of the angle the best practices guide took. "This book doesn't tell you how to do it. It tells you what to look for. There's a respect for the tradesperson." Throughout the book, the emphasis is on certified, competent and qualified workers who consider each action carefully before proceeding to the next step at every phase of planning and construction.

One of the key reasons the book is so practical, according to Oborowsky, is that some of the team members are actually ironworkers, experts in their field who had to dig deep within themselves to express exactly what was important about working around cranes, loading and unloading steel, and connecting the big beams correctly.

Marc Bergeron, the committee vice-chair and co-owner of AB&S Steel in Calgary, agrees. "I am a hands-on ironworker, with experience in what we (as a committee) were trying to write about. I'm still out in the field every day, dealing with safety (while juggling other business issues). I hire apprentices. I deal with contractors. I do pre-job tendering. Being an owner and an ironworker means I also see a lot of different stages in the construction process."

Bergeron explains that there's a difference in the amount of safety documentation developed at the big heavy industry companies like Syncrude and Suncor and the small companies working on commercial and somewhat lighter industrial construction. The smaller companies don't have the level of documentation, although there is certainly the same level of expertise. However, he says, this small manual is a big step toward levelling the safety playing field. "We brought contractors and owners into the picture, and now just about everybody's tied into it, with the endorsement of different associations and the ironworkers' unions."

One of the more difficult challenges, Bergeron says, was to cull the huge piles of great information everybody wanted to put into the manual. "We didn't want a three-inch manual that would be sitting on a shelf," he says, adding that he's particularly proud of the way the book, small though it is, has good clear diagrams, references to specific sections of the Alberta OH&S Act, regulation and code, and occasional references to other standards and relevant associations.

According to Bergeron, "One of the problems in today's industry is that everybody thinks somebody else is being safe for them, so they don't have to think about it. They do."

Darrell Laboucan, Ironworkers Local #720 business manager, says that getting consensus from the ironworkers' community about what makes a best practice will be a big part of the manual's success. Ironworkers' Union #720 hasn't had a fatality or a lost time injury attributable to a fall since the legislation changed in 2004, Laboucan adds.

And while the manual is Alberta-made and specifically applies to Alberta laws, its usefulness is spreading. One project Laboucan knows of had six companies bidding on the structural steel components, and all were issued copies of the book so they knew the level of safety they would be expected to meet.

### For more information

The Manufacturers' Health & Safety Assocation, www.mhsa.ab.ca, has made the Structural Steel Erection Best Practices manual available for downloading at www.mhsa.ab.ca/Steel%20Erection%20Web.pdf. To contact the MHSA, call 1-888-249-2001 (Edmonton office) or 1-888-249-2002 (Calgary office).

*Kerry Tremblay is a Calgary freelance writer specializing in safety and training.*

## RESOURCES

**WEB LINKS**

**www.mhsa.ab.ca/newsletters/SafteyLink%20June_06.pdf**
Safety Link, MHSA Newsletter (p. 9)

**IN THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT LIBRARY – LABOUR BUILDING**
For contact information, see page 17.

**Continuous Fall Protection for Steel Erectors (Video)**
The three key components are a fall protection plan, a fall prevention system and a rescue plan. (VC 0414)

# WORKPLACE FATALITIES

## January 2006 – April 2006

The following information about deaths caused by work-related incidents or exposure is published to remind readers of the importance of workplace health and safety. In many cases the investigation into these fatalities is continuing. Final investigation reports are filed at the Alberta Government Library – Labour Building site and can be reviewed there or at www.whs.gov.ab.ca/fatalities.

To protect personal privacy, the fatality descriptions do not include the names of the deceased.

Most work-related incident fatalities that fall under provincial jurisdiction are investigated by Workplace Health & Safety. In general, highway traffic, farm, disease or heart attack fatalities are not investigated.

**The following fatalities have been or are being investigated.**

**A 19-year-old directional drilling labourer** working on a pipeline died after being struck on the head by the bucket of a backhoe. The worker had been on the job for approximately three weeks.

**A 48-year-old logging truck operator** died when a log fell off a truck that was being unloaded and struck the worker on the head.

**A 43-year-old foreman** with 22 years of experience died after being crushed between two railcars. The worker attempted to move one of the cars by releasing a hand brake, and the car began rolling.

**A 40-year-old welder** who was working alone fell approximately 3 metres from the mezzanine of a welding shop. It appears that the worker fell over a handrail while going down a stairway. She died in hospital 11 days later.

**A 52-year-old fitter** was killed at a metal manufacturing plant while welding a Tema (flange) onto a steel cylinder that was placed on a set of rollers. The steel cylinder fell off the rollers, pinning the worker against a set of steel racks. The worker had more than 25 years of experience.

**A 55-year-old driller** with 30 years of experience was trapped and crushed on a lease site where a rig was rigging out. The worker was caught in a pinch point between a fixed part of the substructure and a moving part of the drawworks and derrick section.

**A 47-year-old HVAC installer** working at a portable building construction site died from a 4-metre fall from an extension ladder to the ground. The worker, who had 20 years of experience, lost his balance while prying on a small transitional duct inside a wall opening.

**A 38-year-old well control supervisor** lost control while driving a truck on a log haul road. The worker was fatally injured when the truck ran into a power pole.

**A 46-year-old salesman** was killed after failing to stop at a stop sign. The worker's vehicle entered an intersection on a log haul road and collided with the trailer of a log truck.

## THE LAST RESORT

**Reporting on Recent Convictions Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act**

**Employer**

Cavan Contractors Ltd.

**Incident**

On April 24, 2003, a worker in Wainwright, Alberta, fell 5 metres into a basement and suffered a broken leg when formwork covering a floor opening collapsed.

**Violation**

On February 15, 2006, Cavan Contractors Ltd. pleaded guilty to failing to ensure that an opening or a hole through which a worker could fall was protected by a securely installed temporary covering that would withstand the load required by the legislation, or a guardrail and toe boards [Section 60(a), General Safety Regulation]. Three other charges under the Occupational Health and Safety Act [sections 2(1)(a)(ii), 3 (3) and 18 (6)] were dropped, as well as one charge under the General Safety Regulation [Section 21(1)].

**Fine**

Cavan Contractors Ltd. received a total penalty of $40,750: a fine of $5,000 plus a $750 victim fine surcharge; and a payment of $35,000 under Section 41.1 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act – $17,500 to East Central Health for patient lifts and electric beds for extended care and $17,500 to Blessed Sacrament School in Wainwright for vocational education programs with an emphasis on safety training.

# APPLICATIONS FOR PARTICULARS

**by Tamara Trull**

Occupational health and safety charges are detailed in a legal document called an "Information." The accused is provided with a copy of the Information, along with disclosure—under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, crown prosecutors are obliged to disclose all relevant information in their possession to an accused, unless the information is excluded from disclosure by a legal privilege. In the realm of occupational health and safety prosecutions, "applications for particulars" arise when an accused wants details of the manner and means of the allegations against him or her in addition to those provided by the Information and disclosure.

On two recent applications for particulars, the Court denied the applications and ruled that the Crown had provided defence with sufficient information so as not to be prejudiced in the preparation of their cases. In these two cases disclosure materials were comprised of copies of all witness statements, photographs, investigation notes and reports or documents gathered in the course of the Workplace Health & Safety office's investigation. In addition, the crown prosecutor elected to disclose to each of the applicants a Workplace Health and Safety Incident Report in order to help them understand the allegations against them. These reports provided a summary of the evidence gathered and a detailed itemization of the potential charges, which specifically referenced the evidence that supported the charges.

The Crown is prepared to provide particulars when there is a legitimate concern that the allegations and underlying circumstances are so vague as to interfere with the ability of the accused to prepare a defence. This will happen rarely, however, as the Crown makes every effort to ensure that complete disclosure is made on every occupational health and safety file and that all allegations are understood so as to allow for a full defence and a fair trial.

To suggest topics for future columns, please send a message to Tamara.Trull@gov.ab.ca or Brian.Caruk@gov.ab.ca.

*Tamara Trull is a Crown Prosecutor in the Regulatory Unit of Alberta Justice.*

**Employer**

Dan Bailey Oilfield & Road Construction Ltd.

**Incident**

On June 23, 2003, in Hinton, Alberta, a welder was seriously injured by an explosion that occurred while the worker was repairing a hole in the top of a cargo tank.

**Violation**

On April 13, 2006, Dan Bailey Oilfield & Road Construction Ltd. pleaded guilty to failing to ensure, as far as it was reasonably practicable for the employer to do so, the health and safety of a worker engaged in the work of that employer [Section 2(1)(a)(i), Regulatory Unit]. Three charges under the General Safety Regulation [sections 185(2)(b), 185(2)(d) and 185(2)(e)] were dropped.

**Fine**

Dan Bailey Oilfield & Road Construction Ltd. received a total penalty of $75,750: a fine of $5,000 plus a $750 victim fine surcharge; and a payment of $70,000 to the Hinton Healthcare Foundation.

For more information go to www.whs.gov.ab.ca/whs-prosecutions

Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to:
CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT
Alberta Human Resources and Employment
Workplace Health & Safety and
Employment Standards Compliance
10th Floor, South Tower, Capital Health Centre
10030 – 107 Street, Edmonton AB T5J 3E4
E-mail whs@gov.ab.ca

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